

XXXI.—Notes on some Japanese Cephalopods.—A Review of Sasaki's 'Albatross' Report*. By S. STILLMAN BERRY, Redlands, California.

THE important collection of Cephalopods obtained by the 'Albatross' in the North-western Pacific in 1906, originally in the hands of Prof. S. Watasé for study, was by him turned over to Prof. Sasaki, from whose pen now comes the present welcome paper.

Although the unfortunate brevity of many sections would not ordinarily so indicate, this evidently constitutes the long-awaited final report on the collection. The author is understood to be engaged upon a monographic survey of the cephalopods of Japan, in course of which it is but fair to suppose that he intends to elucidate the characters of the species concerned in much greater detail. Be that as it may, the forty and odd pages of the 'Albatross' report record a collection of sixty species (an astounding number of these animals for so narrowly delimited a region, and one which could probably be duplicated by similar expenditure of time and energy nowhere else in the world, unless in some of the little-known areas of the South Pacific), apportionable among twenty-nine genera. Of these no less than eighteen species, two subspecies or varieties, and two genera are described as new. *Watasella*, the first of the new genera, is based upon an extraordinary cirroteuthid, in which a "tubular pouch," enclosing a curious filamentous organ, "exists between the first and second arms on either side, running radially through the umbrella, and opening externally on the umbrella edge." Although the significance of such an arrangement can hardly be guessed at from the scanty information given, it seems to the reviewer that the creation of a new family principally on this basis, as Sasaki seems to have done, is possibly premature. The conservative and more fundamental features of the Cirroteuthoidea are so much more impressive than their divergencies that there is certainly ground for the feeling that their relationships are better expressed by the inclusion of all within the confines of a single family than by the separation into two or more families on the ground of purely adaptive characters, such as the presence or absence of an odontophore, the width of the pallial aperture, the compression of the body, and so on, as has been attempted in various

* "Report on Cephalopods collected during 1906 by the United States Bureau of Fisheries steamer 'Albatross' in the North-western Pacific." By Madoka Sasaki. (Proceedings United States National Museum, vol. 57, pp. 163-203, pls. 23-26, 1920.)

ways by Thiele, Grimpe, and other recent German writers. Further investigation of the filamentiferous pouches of *Watasella*, its skeletal features, and buccal organs, will be awaited with interest. There seems indeed no vanguard to the procession of astonishing novelties being continuously brought to light from the Japanese fauna.

The second new genus, *Gonatopsis*, is likewise somewhat of a puzzle. Its most extraordinary peculiarity, and that which has suggested the name of its type-species, *octopedatus*, is dismissed with a curt two words, "Tentacles absent." But the same condition has been described so frequently in the history of cephalopod taxonomy that one may be pardoned a little healthy scepticism until more conclusive evidence can be brought forward to show that this loss is not the result of accident or otherwise a secondary or ontogenetic circumstance.

Chunella is proposed as a new generic name for *Bolitena diaphana* (Hoyle), Chun, on the suggested rather than proven ground that the typical *Bolitena* of Steenstrup is related to *Alloposus* rather than to *Eledonella*, as maintained by Chun. This is an interesting view, and should be inquired into further by someone in a position satisfactorily to settle the point raised, but the argument advanced requires much elaboration to be altogether convincing.

A great preponderance of the new forms described (12 out of 20) are members of the genus *Polypus*. It is impossible at present to give any rational discussion of the probable relationships of these, but attention should be called to the fact that two of the new names proposed are unfortunately preempted for use elsewhere. As Prof. Sasaki has most courteously expressed a wish that the present reviewer rechristen them, the name *Polypus hokkaidensis* is here proposed for *Polypus glaber*, Sasaki, 1920, not *P. glaber*, "Rüppell," Wülker, 1920 (prior publication), and the name *Polypus madokai** for *P. pustulosus*, Sasaki, 1920, not *Octopus pustulosus*, "Peron," Blainville, 1826.

An interesting feature of the paper is the discovery in Japanese waters of the genus *Sceurgus*, hitherto known only from the Hawaiian Islands and the Mediterranean. In view of the several discrepancies noted by Sasaki, its specific identity with the Hawaiian form is probably not certain.

It is worth noting that by all odds the most abundant species in the collection, represented by about 100 specimens, was *Rossia pacifica*.

* Named in honour of Prof. Sasaki in recognition of his work as a student of Japanese Cephalopoda, as well as in some degree to acknowledge the recent receipt of several signal courtesies from his hands.